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ABSTRACT

President Ronald Reagan was outspoken concerning criticisms of the Soviet government and at one time described the USSR as an evil empire. This type of diabolical enemy image has been identified as a war-promoting perception. This present study was designed to identify the underlying values which are associated with attitudes congruent with the diabolical enemy image of the USSR. Respondents were 100 adults with an average age of 39 from the rural Pacific Northwest. Respondents completed the Rokeach Value Survey-Form G, along with selected attitude items which had been utilized in a national opinion poll in 1983. Respondents who viewed the USSR as an evil empire placed a significantly higher priority on the instrumental value of clean and considered themselves to be more conservative than those who did not view the USSR as an evil empire. People who did not view the USSR as an evil empire placed a significantly higher value on the terminal value of wisdom and the instrumental value of intellect. Tables and 25 references are included. (Author/JHP)

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Value-Attitude Relationships Regarding Enemy Images of the USSR

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Abstract

President Reagan has been outspoken concerning criticisms of the Soviet government and has described the Soviet Union as an "evil empire". Ralph K. White (1984) has identified this type of diabolical enemy image as a war-promoting perception. This present study is designed to identify the underlying values which are associated with attitudes congruent with the diabolical enemy image of the Soviet Union. Respondents were 100 adults with an average age of 39 from the rural Pacific Northwest. Respondents completed the Rokeach Value Survey - Form G along with selected attitude items which had been utilized in a national opinion poll in 1983. Respondents who viewed the Soviet Union as an evil empire placed a significantly higher priority on the instrumental value of clean and considered themselves more conservative than who did not view the Soviet Union as an evil empire. Those who did not view the Soviet Union as an evil empire placed a significantly higher value on the terminal value of wisdom and the instrumental value of intellect.

Value-Attitude Relationships Regarding Enemy Images of the USSR

Militarily, a nation's enemy is another nation with which there is overt or latent hostility which might lead to war (Findlay, Holsti, & Fagan, 1967). The twentieth century relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union has cycled through expedient cooperation, military tensions and diplomatic hostilities (e.g., Weisberger, 1984; White, 1984). Since World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union, as the two super powers of the world with large nuclear arsenals, have clearly been enemies of epic proportions.

During his first term in office, President Reagan and members of his conservative administration were quite outspoken concerning criticisms of the Soviet government, its leaders, and their intentions. In March of 1983, Reagan described the Soviet Union as "the focus of evil in the modern world" (Sidey, 1983, p. 18). His "evil empire" speech to national fundamentalist religious leaders also made his perceptions of Soviet intentions at that time very clear. The President viewed the Soviets as intent on "enforcing their will in every corner of the globe" and "its eventual domination of all peoples on earth" (Church, 1983, p. 13).

A public opinion survey by Time/Yankelovich, Skelly and White in December of 1983 focused on several issues related to citizen views of the Soviet Union as an evil empire (Hard line, soft line, 1984). A total of 85% of their sample of registered voters believed the Soviet Union was behind every communist takeover in

the world. Three of every four respondents to this survey believed most communist countries were merely puppets of the Soviet Union. Nearly the same number (73%) reported that the real problem with communism is that it threatens our religious and moral values. A November 1985 Los Angeles Times survey and a Gallup poll found a little over half of their respondents did view the Soviet Union as an evil empire (Public assesses the Reagan record, 1986).

A cluster analysis of public attitudes conducted by Lauer (cited in Yankelovich & Doble, 1984) identified four attitude variables which divide the U.S. population into four homogeneous groups regarding views of the Soviet Union. The "threat minimizers", which include about 23% of the U.S. population, believe nuclear war is unwinnable and don't think it will happen. This group is therefore willing to take risks in dealing with the Soviets, to reject conciliatory gestures, to advocate a stronger U.S. military capability, and generally to want to weaken the Soviets wherever possible. The "concialiationists" also believe nuclear war is unwinnable, but view the possibility of one as real and consider it an urgent issue. The 21% of the U.S. population who make up this group have faith in conciliation strategies over confrontational ones, are free of ideological hostility toward the Soviet Union, and want U.S. arms reductions. The "middle of the roaders" comprise 31% of the population. This largest group is ideologically opposed to communism and the Soviet Union, but since they think of the threat of nuclear war quite a bit, they adopt a

pragmatic "live and let live" philosophy. This group desires peaceful solutions to our disagreements with the Soviets. The remaining 25% of the U.S. population hold a "evil empire" view of the Soviets. This fourth group believes the Soviet Union threatens our moral and religious values. In addition, they believe nuclear war with the Soviets is inevitable and that God will assure their personal survival when it happens.

Considerable concern has been raised about the implications of the enemy images of the Soviet Union and this view of the Soviet Union as an evil empire (e.g., Bialer, 1985; Flamenbaum & Silverstein, 1987; Holt, 1984, 1987; Koopman, Snyder, & Jervis, 1987; Mack, 1982; Plous & Zimbardo, 1984; Trost & Cialdini, 1987, White, 1984). This is particularly true when the effect of this perception is viewed in relationship to the causes of war from an historical context. Ralph K. White (1984) has described the interaction of war-promoting motives and war-promoting perceptions in terms of U.S.-Soviet relations. Three of the misperceptions related to causes of previous wars include a diabolical enemy image, a moral self-image, and a "pro-us" illusion. White makes the case that these kinds of motivated misperceptions result in a Good Guys-Bad Guys view of the world situation which has facilitated anger toward one's enemies and precipitated war in the past. The "evil empire" image of the Soviet Union clearly fits White's definition of a war-promoting perception.

Given the devastating implications of a nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union, the existence of this "evil empire" view in a

sizable segment of the U.S. population needs to be better understood. One potentially productive avenue to pursue in developing an understanding of this view of the Soviet Union is human values. With all of its religious and ideological dimensions which become apparent in Lauer's (cited in Yankelovich & Doble, 1984) analysis of public attitudes, those who view the Soviets as an "evil empire" would be expected to hold distinctly different values than those who do not. The psychological research which has investigated the impact of the threat of nuclear war and peace-related issues has focused on attitudes, opinions, and behaviors and has generally failed to include human values. Rokeach and his colleagues have demonstrated values are significantly related to many political attitudes and behaviors (e.g. Rokeach, 1973, 1979; Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984). Perhaps the values individuals hold are primary determinants of their views of their enemies. The purpose of this study was to specifically assess the value differences among individuals holding different attitudes toward the Soviet Union. In particular this present study was designed to identify the underlying values which are associated with attitudes congruent with the diabolical enemy image of the Soviet Union.

Methods

Participants

The participants in this study were an available sample of 100 adults from the staff and community of a small state supported college in the Pacific Northwest. A total of 53% of the sample

were male and 47% were female. The mean age of the participants was 39.6 with a standard deviation of 12.9. A total of 58% of the respondents were college graduates, 15% completed some college courses, 27% had received a high school diploma, and the remaining one percent had completed some high school. The respondents political affiliations were identified as Democrat, Republican, Independent and Other by 47%, 22%, 29% and 2% of the respondents, respectively. On a seven-point liberal/conservative scale 37% of the respondents identified themselves as liberal, 22% as conservative, and 41% as moderate.

Procedure and Instrumentation

Each respondent completed a questionnaire which included demographic items, the Rokeach Value Survey - Form G, and attitude items dealing with the Soviet Union. Completion time for the entire instrument was usually 25 to 40 minutes. All surveys were completed during the early part of the summer of 1987.

The Rokeach Value Survey - Form G (RVS) was included in a paper and pencil form. Respondents were required to separately rank 18 terminal values and 18 instrumental values according to their importance as a guiding principle in their lives. The highest value is assigned a number 1, the second highest value a number 2, and this process continues until the lowest value is assigned the number 18. In this manner two value hierarchies of priorities are determined for each respondent.

After the RVS, respondents completed seven public opinion items which assessed attitudes toward the Soviet Union. These

items were previously used in a national survey conducted by Time/Yankelovich, Skelly and White in December of 1983 to assess the degree to which registered voters focused on the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" (Hard line, soft line, 1984). For each item respondents indicated their views on a five point Likert scale. These items, which are presented in Table 1, assessed several issues related to citizen views of the Soviet Union as an evil empire. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 were quantified by assigning the number 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for unsure, 2 for disagree , and 1 for strongly disagree. Items 5 and 7 were reverse scored with the assignment of the number 1 for strongly agree, 2 for agree, 3 for unsure, 4 for disagree , and 5 for strongly disagree. A single score was computed for each respondent with these seven items by summing the responses and dividing by 7. High scores (above 0) indicate an "evil empire" perspective and low scores (below 0) indicate an absence of an "evil empire" point of view. This seven attitude item scale was found to be internally consistent with an alpha coefficient of .77.

Results

The percentages of agreement and disagreement for each item assessing attitudes toward the Soviet Union are presented in Table 1. The percentages of agreement and disagreement in the December 1983 national sample of registered voter data gathered by Time/Yankelovich, Skelly and White in December of 1983 (Hard line, soft line, 1984) are also provided in Table 1 for comparison.

Insert Table 1 about here

Respondents were divided into three groups based on their scores on the "evil empire" scale. The 21 individuals with a scale score above 0.5 were assigned to the "evil empire" group. The 27 individuals with scale scores below -0.5 were assigned to the "not an evil empire" group. The remaining 52 respondents were assigned to an "in between" group. The composite ranks for the terminal and instrumental values for each group were determined using group median ranks. The terminal value composite ranks for the entire sample and for each group are presented in Table 2. The instrumental value composite ranks for the entire sample and for each group are presented in Table 3.

Insert Tables 2 and 3 about here

Each of the terminal and instrumental values for the "evil empire" group and the "not an evil empire" group were analyzed for significant differences using the Mann-Whitney U test. Respondents who viewed the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" placed a significantly higher priority on the instrumental value of clean than who did not view the Soviet Union as an evil empire. Those who did not view the Soviet Union as an evil empire placed a significantly higher value on the terminal value of wisdom and the instrumental value of intellect.

The value hierarchies of the three groups of respondents were generally very similar to each other and to the general population. The Kendall correlation coefficients among the three groups and the most recent national sample data available were computed for the 18 terminal and 18 instrumental value hierarchies. These similarity coefficients are presented in Table 4. All the coefficients were statistically significant at the .01 level.

Insert Table 4 about here

Each respondent also responded to a series of demographic items including gender, age, educational background, political party affiliation and a seven point scale for self-rated conservatism. The chi-square test between the "evil empire" and "not an evil empire" groups for gender (2 X 2) failed to reach significance at the .05 level. While the chi-square test between these two groups and educational background (2 X 4) failed to reach significance at the .05 level the Pearson correlation was significant ($r = -.34$, $p < .01$). Respondents with less education were significantly more likely to be members of the "evil empire" group. No significant relationship was identified between group membership and age using Kendall's tau or the Pearson correlation coefficient. Significant chi-square values were found for these two groups across political party affiliation ($X^2 = 16.53$, $df = 6$, $p < .02$) and self-rated conservatism ($X^2 = 27.79$, $df = 10$, $p <$

.002). Concerning political party affiliation, respondents who were Republican were significantly more likely to view the Soviet Union as an evil empire while respondents who were Democrats were more likely to not hold this view. Respondents who identified themselves as Independents were in between. Respondents who viewed the Soviet Union as an evil empire were also more likely to be conservative while those who did not hold this view were likely to be more liberal.

Discussion and Conclusions

While some interesting value trends can be seen in the data presented, only very limited and tenuous support for the identification of individual values which underlie the diabolical enemy image of the Soviet Union was gathered. The value hierarchies for those who viewed the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" did not significantly differ from those who did not view the Soviets this way. The trends in the similarity indices indicate those respondents who viewed the Soviets as evil held values which were less like the most recent national sample's values than those who did not view the Soviets as evil. While many of the composite ranks for both terminal and instrumental values of the "evil empire" and "not an evil empire" groups appeared to be very disparate, only three of 36 comparisons reached statistical significance. This "chance-like" number of significant differences may have been a function of small sample size in the two groups, and therefore, low statistical power. At this point the value-attitude connection regarding the view of the

Soviet Union as an evil empire must be rejected. The trends in the data do seem to warrant a replication of the study with stronger sampling procedures.

The demographic findings were much stronger. For this sample of respondents the less educated viewed the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" more frequently than the more educated. If this finding is replicated, it does have the potential to be a very optimistic finding with implications for public education regarding global issues. White (1984) has described the chief corrective for the war-promoting perceptions such as the diabolical enemy image to be realistic empathy. Perhaps those with higher levels of education have developed some level of this realistic empathy which has allowed them to view the Soviets differently without the negative effects of the mirror image phenomenon (Bronfenbrenner, 1961; Plous & Zimbardo, 1984). Given the orientation of the general core requirements of many liberal arts degrees which have incorporated global awareness issues, this interpretation seems plausible. The implications for early involvement of children in an educational experience to avoid the development of diabolical enemy images (e.g., Hesse, 1987) also may be indirectly encouraged by this finding. Further research is needed to determine if these implications do bear fruit as with the correlational data reported here, it can not be determined if its more education which makes the difference or if the individuals who pursued a college degree hold different views as a function of some other variables such as ability, motivation, and

interpersonal skills.

Finally, the respondents who viewed the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" tended to be conservative Republicans. Given the public statements of the Reagan administration and its supporters, this finding in a group from the general population is no surprise. The realistic empathy necessary to view the Soviets as something other than an "evil empire" would be difficult for the conservative person who has lived through the Stalin era and the Cold War period. The ability to change beliefs from the status quo would be expected to be more problematical for the conservative, but not as much so for the liberal (e.g. Kerlinger, 1984).

President Reagan's public posturing toward the Soviet Union has changed dramatically since his Reyjavik Summit meeting with General Secretary Gorbachev in 1986. While he has said that his ideological orientation toward the Soviets has not deviated since his "evil empire" speech (Anderson, 1987), his public behavior toward the Soviets has. Last December's INF treaty for Europe combined with his recent overtures in other areas of arms control have resulted in a "trust but verify" treatment of the Soviets (Watson, 1987). This change has resulted in some harsh words from his previous staunch conservative supporters (Morganthau, 1987). If Reagan can learn to adopt a realistic empathy of the Soviets, which his "trust but verify" stance implies, perhaps his conservative critics can change their perceptions as well.

Reducing the war-promoting perception of the Soviets as a

diabolical, evil enemy and thereby reducing one potential cause of an unwanted nuclear confrontation seems both wise and warranted. The political orientations of conservatism and liberalism seems to play a major role in this war-promoting "evil empire" view. While additional studies are needed to definitely rule out values as a factor or not, the present study points to education as a more promising means to to this end.

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Table 1
Attitude Items Assessing Views of the Soviet Union

	1983 National Data[1]			1987 Local Data		
	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
1. When there's a communist takeover in a country, the Soviet Union is usually behind it.	85%	6%	9%	68%	13%	19%
2. Most communist countries are just puppets of the Soviet Union; they don't decide anything on their own.	75%	5%	20%	40%	17%	43%
3. The real problem with communism is that it threatens our religious and moral values.	73%	4%	23%	37%	16%	47%
4. Most people living in communist countries would rather have some other type of government.	66%	11%	23%	26%	42%	32%
5. We should live and let live. Let the communists have their system and we have ours. There's room in the world for both.	66%	6%	27%	65%	7%	28%
6. When all is said and done, someday the United States will have to fight the Soviet Union to stop communism.	50%	11%	39%	21%	24%	55%
7. However you feel about communism, it may be a good system of government for certain countries.	36%	7%	57%	38%	22%	40%

[1] From Time/Yankelovich, Skelly, & White (Public Opinion, April/May 1984)

Table 2
Composite Ranks for Terminal Value Hierarchies By Soviet Attitudes

Terminal Value	1981 National Sample	Total Sample (N=100)	Attitude Toward The Soviets: Is An Evil Empire (N=21)	In Between (N=52)	Not An Evil Empire (N=27)
FAMILY SECURITY	1	1	1	1	1
HEALTH	-	2	2	2	2
FREEDOM	3	3	3	3	5
SELF-RESPECT	4	4	4	7	3
WISDOM	6	5	10 *	5	4 *
SALVATION	10	6	5	6	7
A WORLD AT PEACE	2	7	8	4	10
MATURE LOVE	14	8	11	8	6
TRUE FRIENDSHIP	9	9	7	10	8
SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT	7	10	9	11	11
INNER HARMONY	11	11	12	9	9
A COMFORTABLE LIFE	8	12	6	13	13
EQUALITY	12	13	15	12	12
NATIONAL SECURITY	13	14	13	14	15
AN EXCITING LIFE	17	15	14	15	14
SOCIAL RECOGNITION	18	16	16	16	17
PLEASURE	16	17	17	18	16
A WORLD OF BEAUTY	15	18	18	17	18

* Mann-Whitney U test significant at the .05 level.

Table 3
Composite Ranks for Instrumental Value Hierarchies By Soviet Attitudes

Instrumental Value	1971 National Sample	Total Sample (N=100)	Attitude Toward The Soviets: Is An Evil Empire (N=21)	In Between (N=52)	Not An Evil Empire (N=27)
HONEST	1	1	2	1	1
RESPONSIBLE	2	2	1	2	2
LOVING	3	3	4	3	3
INDEPENDENT	12	4	6	4	7
FORGIVING	4	5	8	6	4
LOYAL	-	6	3	10	5
AMBITIOUS	3	7	5	7	9
HELPFUL	7	8	11	5	8
CAPABLE	9	9	10	9	12
COURAGEOUS	6	10	12	8	13
SELF-CONTROLLED	11	11	7	15	11
BROADMINDED	5	12	15	11	10
INTELLECTUAL	15	13	17 **	14	6 **
POLITE	14	14	13	12	16
CLEAN	10	15	9 **	13	17 **
LOGICAL	17	16	14	16	14
IMAGINATIVE	18	17	18	17	15
OBEDIENT	16	18	16	18	18

** Mann-Whitney U test significant at the .01 level.

Table 4

Similarity Indices for Value Hierarchies By Soviet Attitudes [1]

	Total Sample (N=100)	Attitude Toward The Soviets: Is An Evil Empire (N=21)	Attitude Toward The Soviets: In Between (N=52)	Attitude Toward The Soviets: Not An Evil Empire (N=27)	Most Recent National Sample (1971)
Total Sample		.86	.94	.88	.83
Is An Evil Empire	.80		.75	.69	.75
In Between	.88	.71		.77	.69
Is Not An Evil Empire	.86	.68	.79		.88
Most Recent National Sample (1981)	.69	.65	.68	.57	

[1] Kendall tau coefficients for terminal value hierarchies are below the main diagonal and for instrumental value hierarchies above the main diagonal. All coefficients are significant at the .01 level or greater.